

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please CANCEL claims 8, 9, 11, and 12 without prejudice to or disclaimer of their subject matter. Please AMEND claims 1, 3, 4, 10, 13, and 14, as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units, and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, said apparatus, comprising:

determination means for determining whether a no-operation state by an operator continues for a predetermined time;

auto-clear operation means for automatically ~~shifting~~ setting the image forming apparatus to a predetermined operation mode from among the plurality of operation modes on the basis of a determination result of said determination means; and

control means for, in response to said auto-clear operation means ~~shifting~~ setting the image forming apparatus to the predetermined operation mode, controlling the sheet processing apparatus so as to enable a sheet storage unit, which is assigned to the predetermined operation mode, to store a sheet in a sheet storage unit corresponding to the predetermined operation mode from among the plurality of sheet storage units even if not receiving a job data for the predetermined operation mode.

2. (Cancelled).

3. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a user interface including a display device commonly used in the respective modes,

wherein in response to ~~when~~ said auto-clear operation means ~~shifts~~ setting the image forming apparatus to the predetermined operation mode, display control is performed to display a window corresponding to the predetermined operation mode ~~after the shift on the display device in synchronism with the control of the sheet processing apparatus.~~

4. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising setting means for selecting a mode to be ~~shifted~~ set to by said auto-clear operation means.

5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising setting means for performing setting of assigning any one of the plurality of operation modes to each of the plurality of sheet storage units.

6. (Currently Amended) A control method for an image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units, and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, said method comprising:

a step of determining whether a no-operation state by an operator continues for a predetermined time;

a step of automatically ~~shifting~~ setting the image forming apparatus to a predetermined operation mode from among the plurality of operation modes on the basis of a determination result in the determination step; and

a step of, in response to the operation mode ~~being shifted~~ setting the image forming apparatus to the predetermined operation mode in the operation mode shifting step, controlling the sheet processing apparatus so as to enable a sheet storage unit, which is assigned to the predetermined operation mode, to store a sheet in a sheet storage unit corresponding to the predetermined operation mode from among the plurality of sheet storage units even if not receiving a job data for the predetermined operation mode.

7. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing an image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, to execute the following steps, comprising:

a step of determining whether a no-operation state by an operator continues for a predetermined time;

a step of automatically ~~shifting~~ setting the image forming apparatus to a predetermined operation mode from among the plurality of operation modes on the basis of a determination result in the determination step; and

a step of, in response to the operation mode ~~being shifted~~ setting the image forming apparatus to the predetermined operation mode in the operation mode shifting step,

controlling the sheet processing apparatus so as to enable a sheet storage unit, which is assigned to the predetermined operation mode, to store a sheet in a sheet storage unit corresponding to the predetermined operation mode from among the plurality of sheet storage units even if not receiving job data for the predetermined operation mode.

8-9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units, and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, wherein any one of the plurality of operation modes can be assigned to each of the plurality of sheet storage units, said apparatus comprising:

display control means for displaying display windows corresponding to the operation modes on a display device independently for the respective operation modes; and

control means for, ~~when a display window corresponding to any one of the plurality of operation modes is to be displayed on the display device, controlling a sheet storage unit, corresponding to the operation mode of the window to be displayed, so as to store a sheet in synchronism with display control of said display control means~~ in response to said display control means switching to display a window corresponding to an operation mode among the plurality of operation modes, controlling the sheet processing apparatus so as to enable a sheet storage unit, which is assigned to the switched operation mode, to store a sheet even if not receiving a job data for the switched operation mode.

11-12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) A control method for an image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units, and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, wherein any one of the plurality of operation modes can be assigned to each of the plurality of sheet storage units, said method comprising:

a step of displaying display windows corresponding to the operation modes on a display device independently for the respective operation modes; and

~~a step of, when a display window corresponding to any one of the plurality of operation modes is to be displayed on the display device, controlling a sheet storage unit, corresponding to the operation mode of the window to be displayed, so as to store a sheet in synchronism with display control in the display control step~~ in response to switching to display a window corresponding to an operation mode among the plurality of operation modes, controlling the sheet processing apparatus so as to enable a sheet storage unit, which is assigned to the switched operation mode, to store a sheet even if not receiving a job data for the switched operation mode.

14. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing an image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, to

execute the following steps, wherein any one of the plurality of operation modes can be assigned to each of the plurality of sheet storage units, said program of said medium comprising:

a step of displaying display windows corresponding to the operation modes on a display device independently for the respective operation modes; and

~~a step of, when a display window corresponding to any one of the plurality of operation modes is to be displayed on the display device, controlling a sheet storage unit, corresponding to the operation mode of the window to be displayed, so as to store a sheet in synchronism with display control in the display control step~~ in response to switching to display a window corresponding to an operation mode among the plurality of operation modes, controlling the sheet processing apparatus so as to enable a sheet storage unit, which is assigned to the switched operation mode, to store a sheet even if not receiving a job data for the switched operation mode.